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Victorian Healthcare Association

For immediate release

An annual scholarship program that lends financial support to students who want to be an ongoing part of rural Victoria's health workforce is now open to new applicants.

The Victorian Healthcare Association (VHA) administered scheme last year awarded more than \$155,000 worth of postgraduate and undergraduate scholarships.

In 2010 the Rural Allied Health Postgraduate Scholarship Program and the Rural Allied Health Undergraduate Scholarship Program will again provide significant financial support to rural allied health practitioners and new students seeking careers in rural health.

Applications for postgraduate scholarships of up to \$10,000 close on Friday 12 February 2010, while undergraduate scholarships of \$5000 for bachelor degrees remain open until Friday 12 March 2010.

The VHA's chief executive, Mr Trevor Carr, said the intention of both programs is to foster a committed and well-qualified rural health workforce.

"These scholarship programs are an integral way that Victoria's Department of Health and the VHA can support and help to build a viable rural workforce," Mr Carr said.

"Scholarships are awarded according to strict criteria that prioritise rural students experiencing financial hardship that may otherwise prevent them from studying."

Eligible postgraduate allied health students must be employed by a rural health service (categorised as a RRMA 3-7). Both the postgraduate and undergraduate scholarships are for rural students only. This includes students in Victorian border towns excludes metropolitan Melbourne, Geelong, the Bellarine and Mornington Peninsulas.

All applicants must confirm their 2010 enrolment details and submit a 500 word essay explaining their understanding of the health needs of rural areas and their reasons for wanting to work there.

The VHA also provides financial support to rural allied health practitioners undertaking professional development activities through the Continuing Professional Development Subsidy Program (CPD).

For specific details on the scholarship programs or the CPD grant, please call the VHA on (03) 9094 7777 or email scholarships@vha.org.au.

The Victorian Healthcare Association is the major peak body representing the public healthcare sector in Victoria. Our members include public hospitals, rural and regional health services, community health services and aged care facilities. Established since 1938, the VHA promotes improvement of health outcomes for all Victorians from the perspective of its members.

For further information and
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